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Is the CIA Compatible With Our Government?

To the Editor of The Courant:

A sense of angry frustration is the prevailing American reaction to our involvement in the Dominican Republic. President Johnson's frustration is reported to have made him angry with his critics of the press and the academic community. His critics are angry with him for having undermined overnight, in an impulsive decision to call out the Marines, all the patient efforts of a generation of statesmen to base our hemispheric policy on something other than the big stick.

Yet in blaming the President's obvious inexperience in foreign affairs, as compared to the maturity and sureness of his domestic leadership, we may be overlooking the real cause of our humiliation. We should remember that President Kennedy, who confidently acted and was accepted as his own Secretary of State, brought us equal humiliation at the Bay of Pigs. If two Presidents as different as Johnson and Kennedy make the same mistake, we should look deeper than their limitations for an explanation.

In both cases we intervened militarily in a weak neighboring country, in violation of treaty obligations, international law, and the morals we had long professed, against what we believed was Communist aggression. In Cuba the Communists were already in power, and the fighting men we sent in were not in American uniform, but the danger we saw and our reaction to it were the same.

In both cases official explanations were a mixture of contradictions and falsehoods.

In both cases we acted on the basis of faulty intelligence. In Cuba we expected the people to

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welcome the invaders. In the Dominican Republic we believed that the rebellion was captured by the Communists.

The Central Intelligence Agency has been rightly blamed for the Cuban fiasco since it not only provided the faulty intelligence, but it planned and executed the action taken. There seems no reason to doubt that the CIA has again provided not only a false picture of the situation, but has again played a decisive role in policy planning and execution.

A secret intelligence agency is by its very nature unreliable. Operating in secret, it suffers all the ills of bureaucracy, without any of the checks against stodginess or corruption that public exposure forces on other bureaucracies. The CIA is still fighting the battles of twenty years ago. In fact its whole structure and purpose — to contain a monolithic worldwide Communist movement — prevents it from accepting the

rapid changes of the modern world.

When President Johnson announced he had the names of 50-odd Communists and Castroites in the Dominican rebel leadership, names furnished no doubt by the CIA, he sounded like the ghost of the late Senator McCarthy. As Walter Lippmann said: The press saved us from a moral disaster by bringing out the truth. *Newsweek* reported: "A few of those named were actually found to be fighting alongside the rebels, but not in command posts; several were out of the country; others were in jail; some were dead, and four were even named twice."

Today in America, after the second great national humiliation in four years, the question surely should be raised: Is the CIA, as presently constituted, an institution compatible with free and responsible government?

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